

Message Text

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15

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 AID-05 AGR-05 SR-02 ORM-01 IO-10

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R 111238Z MAR 75

FM AMCONSUL ASMARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3259

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

CINCUSNAVEUR

COMNAVTELCOM

USCINCEUR

COMIDEASTFOR

NAVCOMVINIT ASMARA

NAVCOMMSTA NEA MAKRI

DIRNSA WASHDC

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAGR SREF PINS ET

SUBJ: ASMARA FOOD SUPPLIES

1. SELECTED FOOD SHORTAGES ARE A FACT OF LIFE IN ASMARA AT THIS TIME. IF THE PRESENT SITUATION CONTINUES, THE SHORTAGES WILL PROBABLY REACH THE CRITICAL STAGE BY THE END OF THE MONTH. PRESENTLY, MOST ASMARA RESIDENTS ARE RATIONING THEIR FOOD STOCKS. PERSONS DISPLACED FROM THEIR HOMES AND VILLAGES ARE SUFFERING THE MOST - SOME BECAUSE OF A LACK OF RELIEF SUPPLIES. OTHERS ARE SUFFERING BECAUSE OF LACK OF MONEY TO BUY WHAT FOOD IS AVAILABLE IN THE MARKET.

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2. ASMARA IS A PRIMARY STORAGE AND TRANSFER POINT FOR FOOD COMMODITIES IN ERITREA. DUE TO THE CURRENT HOSTILITY, THE FLOW OF FOOD IN AND OUT OF ASMARA HAS BEEN INTERRUPTED. BG WORKU, OIC 2ND DIV TOLD CONGEN THAT BRIDGES ON ROADS FROM AGORDAT TO ASMARA AND KEREN TO ASMARA HAVE BEEN DESTROYED. HE ALSO SAID THAT THE BROKEN CULVERT ON THE MASSAWA ROAD HAD BEEN REPAIRED AND THE BREAK ASPHALTED OVER. OTHER SOURCES REPORT THAT FIGHTING NEAR ADI CAYEH ON THE ROAD TO MAKELLE IS DISRUPTING TRAFFIC. GRAIN NORMALLY COMES INTO ASMARA FOR STORAGE FROM THE WESTERN ERITREAN LOWLANDS AND TIGRE PROVINCE. IN THE OFF SEASON, IT IS SHIPPED BACK TO TIGRE. THERE IS PRESENTLY AN ADEQUATE SUPPLY OF VEGETABLES IN ASMARA BECAUSE THE EXPORT CROP IS NOW SOLD LOCALLY. HOWEVER, SHORTAGES ARE EXPECTED IN THE FUTURE BECAUSE MANY FARMERS ARE NOT REPLANTING, DUE TO THE UNCERTAIN FUTURE. MEAT AND MILK IS AVAILABLE IN ASMARA TO THOSE WHO CAN AFFORD IT ALTHOUGH THE DEMAND IS LESS NOW BECAUSE OF LENTEN FASTING. SUGAR DEFICITS HAVE BEEN REPORTED IN ASMARA, ADI UGRI, 30 MILES SOUTH OF ASMARA, AND IN MASSAWA. TEFF, FLOUR AND PASTA ARE IN SHORT SUPPLY IN ASMARA. THOSE THAT CAN AFFORD TO DO SO HAVE HOARDED FOOD. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT GRAIN MERCHANTS HAVE SOME OF THEIR STOCKS AT HOME RATHER THAN IN THE SHOPS, WHICH ARE BEING INVENTORIED BY THE ARMY.

3. THE OUTLOOK FOR THE NEXT SEVERAL MONTHS IS FOR INCREASING SHORTAGES OF ESSENTIAL ITEMS AND HIGHER PRICES. THE RELIEF EFFORT, NOW MINIMAL, MAY SOON BECOME ESSENTIAL.
SHERRY

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